## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The writing of this thesis has been supported by much encouragement and the intellectual support of many people. I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to all of them.

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my thesis supervisor and the chairman of the thesis committee, Dr. Jakrapong Uchupalanun. At the initial stage, he helped me to identify and formulate the main thesis topic. He was also always available to discuss and suggest ways to resolve the problems with my thesis many times.

I am also grateful for Dr. Tatre Jantarakolica and Dr. Sittisak Leelahanon (members of my thesis committee) who gave me very useful comments and help on the methodology of my thesis, in particular the regression method section.

I also wish to express my gratitude to UFJ foundation for granting me a scholarship during the two-year study period. Moreover, I would like to thank Dr. Archanun Kohpaiboon and the staff of the ESCAP library (United Nations) and FAO library in Thailand for collecting all data systems needed for my thesis.

I am especially grateful to Ms. Michelle Tan for editing all of the thesis and teaching me the English language. In my opinion, she is the best teacher and my best foreign friend.

I also extend my gratitude to Mrs. Mika Saito who developed and introduced the comparative advantage index (a measurement approach). It was very useful for doing my thesis. Moreover, it really opens my eyes to know new approach of measuring comparative advantage.

My thanks also go to my graduate friends (Jan, Poon, Namtip, Aim, Champ, Lope, Juw, Him, and Wuth), my senior in MA (P' Ton, P'Kai, P'Air, P'Pui, P'Pick, P'Bo, P'Kao, P'Mai, and P'Wit), and other MA students for the greatest support and sharing the best time with each other. Moreover, while I was studying in MA, I learned not only knowledge of economics, but also the exciting activities of my life-- taking photographs, playing badminton, and Karaoke singing). Thanks to all my Phrae friends in Thammasat University (Kook, Nu, Au, Farm, Tee, Pat, Sine, Nok, Cee, and Aey) for their friendship and all the wonderful times we have had together. I am especially grateful to Sine, who supported a useful online database (some data and articles) essential for completing this thesis.

I extend my sincere thanks to K.Tum tutorial institute (P'Tum, P'Oop) for offering the chance to meet new best friends and teach mathematics to young children. I gained much valuable work experience of working and positive viewpoints.

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to the most important people in my life, my family: Dad, Mom, my brother for their love and financial assistance. Moreover, I would like to thank them again for believing in me to do anything in my life.

However, there are other people who have contributed to this thesis whom I do not mention here. I would like to say "thank you" to all of you.

Any deficiencies in this thesis are my responsibility.

Thammasat University Bangkok, Thailand Alongkorn Tanasritunyakue May 2008